

THE URBAN JUNGLE

The Newsletter of the Ruislip-Northwood Co-operative Small Holding and Allotment Society Limited

Issue 27 – June 2012

Introduction

Well, what a gardening year it has been so far. We had drought and heat in March followed by a cold, wet and windy April and this weather lasted into most of May and whatever happened to blazing June! The only things doing well on our plot are the slugs and snails. I have just read a newspaper article which suggests that, in general, vegetables are a month behind where they should be. That makes me feel better, because I realise that everyone is struggling with these conditions. Thank goodness I'm not a farmer. I wonder what July will have in store for us. It is a tough year to be taking on a new plot, but we have had some new recruits so

Welcome to

Ken, who has taken over Matt and Julie's old plot; and Ian, who has taken the plot previously looked after by Barbara Faulkner. Barbara, meanwhile, has moved down the path to take on part of Sam's old plot opposite the main locker block.

A Statement from the Committee

As you are probably already aware, regrettably Trevor and Angela have resigned as Secretary and Chairman of the allotment committee. Thank you to both of them for all their hard work in developing the allotments over the last 5 years.

Ines Uriarte is currently Acting Chairman and Barbara Cumbers has taken on the role of Acting Secretary, as well as continuing with the role of Treasurer. (Barbara definitely does not want to be Secretary after the next AGM, if only because it's not good practice for the same person to hold two of the named offices at the same time, and she rather likes being Treasurer). If you think you might be able to take on the job, please let one of the committee know.

The committee will continue to work hard for the benefit of the Society. Committee contact details are as follows – to report any site related emergencies, e.g. plumbing leaks, use 07884-416935. To report thefts or intruders, or for plot inquiries, use: 07914-921390. Hopefully, this will enable problems to be handled quickly. Other inquiries can be emailed to: joelstreetallotments@hotmail.co.uk

A Message from Trevor and Angela

We would like to express our gratitude to the many members and friends of the Society who have thanked us and wished us well over the past few weeks; we have felt totally overwhelmed and humbled by your comments. But most of all, we would like to thank all those who have helped us to bring about the many improvements of the past four-and-a-half years; with your help, drive and enthusiasm we have transformed the site into a true community.

We now have a membership in excess of 100, with every plot tenanted, and previously derelict areas cleared and brought into cultivation. Our working parties have renovated the site and have helped gain us a £10,000 Big Lottery grant to install a composting toilet. Our links with the local community, through local Primary schools, the Residents' Association and the Chamber of Commerce, the Community Police, and plant sales at community events have ensured that local residents value and support us. Above all, through working parties, regular communication and this Newsletter, we have come together as a community to achieve things; an aspect which is constantly noticed by visitors.

Our site is regarded as a flag-ship, both within the Borough and wider afield, and is the pride of the local community. It is now up to us, the members, to build on those achievements.

Plot Inspections

Plot inspections have recently taken place.

Their aim is to identify any plot where there might be a cause for concern, so that any potential problems can be tackled in a low-key way before they get out of hand. They are done twice a year, in late Spring and late

Summer/early Autumn. A small group of committee members and ordinary members are on the team, the exact composition of which varies from year to year. Their only brief is to report any possible problems to the Committee. These are then discussed individually and the Committee instructs the Secretary which allotment holders, if any, to contact. The first approach is always a low-key one, as we have all had times when real life takes over and tending allotments takes a back seat! This is nearly always enough to sort things out. For any plot-holder who continually refuses to cultivate their allotment, the ultimate action is to send a "non-cultivation" letter, giving twenty-eight days for the member to start to put things right. (This is in accord with national legislation and has been agreed by the legal department of NSALG.)

Annual BBQ - A Date for your Diary

We were going to have our annual BBQ in July, but because of the continuing bad weather, the committee has agreed to change the date to 29th September. Look out for more details being sent out via email or on notice boards around the site.

Diamond Jubilee – Plant Sale Feedback

Thanks to everyone who donated their time and plants to make this occasion a success. We raised in excess of £250 which will be donated to the charity Healing Gardens. They say on their website “We offer people with severe and long term health problems the opportunity to rediscover and find new enjoyment in life through their gardens. We work on people's own gardens to make them more manageable and accessible, and run monthly outings for our beneficiaries”. They work throughout Hillingdon, and will try to use our donation for people in Northwood and Ruislip.

Water Leak

We have a significant water leak somewhere on the site. Michael has been trying to locate it - but has had no success so far. Please keep an eye out around your plot and report any suspicious soggy areas to him. The water is being turned off to reduce water loss, but during any spells of hot weather (chance will be a fine thing!) it will be left on.

All Clear

Staying on the water theme – can all those plot holders whose plots back onto the centre trench please keep their section clear of rubbish etc. to ensure effective drainage – thanks.

Freebies?

We are lucky in that we frequently get gardening goodies given to us. Anything that is free for members to take, (usually pallets, wood chip etc.) is put on the north end of the car park (near Tesco's). Anything which is put on the plot to the south of the car park (near the toilet) is NOT available for members to help themselves. Sometimes this will be equipment which is to be used for site maintenance, or sometimes it will be available to members for a small charge. If any of you have recently taken either scaffold boards or blue netting from this area, will you please let Mick know, as there is a charge for these. Thanks

Our Web Site

Just a reminder that we have our own website and that Trevor is still our web master. He is interested in receiving any allotment related items or photos which he can include on the web site. Why not take a look at it and maybe make some suggestions as to what could be included. www.joelstreetallotments.weebly.com

And Finally

Still thinking about the weather, just in case we get some warm, humid days, don't forget to check your potatoes and tomatoes for signs of blight.

Jenny Jessup